

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
West Fertilizer Inc. - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VI

Subject: POLREP #4
Progress
West Fertilizer Inc.

West, TX
Latitude: 31.8165640 Longitude: -97.0877630

To: Ragan Broyles, US EPA
Lawrence Stanton, EPA HQ
Anthony Buck, TCEQ

From: Mark Hayes, Federal On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 4/20/2013

Reporting Period: 4/20/13

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead:	Incident Category:
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 4/17/2013	Start Date: 4/17/2013
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

Fire and explosion at a fertilizer formulation facility

1.1.2.1 Location

West, McLennan County, Texas

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The release of agricultural chemicals into the environment, which may impact human health.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

The facility was destroyed in the fire and explosion, with the exception of four "bullet" tanks and a hopper car filled with ammonium nitrate. The ammonium nitrate gondola car was blown off the rail siding, damaged, and released powdered fertilizer onto the ground.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

On April 17, 2013 a fire and explosion occurred at the West Fertilizer Company located in West, Texas. Local, state, and federal law enforcement and response personnel have responded to the incident. The U.S. EPA has mobilized personnel to the incident to conduct air monitoring activities upon request from Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

The impact of the explosion has impacted an approximate ½ mile radius which includes residential homes, a nursing home, an apartment community and several schools.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

At 0000 hours on April 18, 2013 the EPA Airborne Spectral Photometric Collection Technology (ASPECT) aircraft conducted an overflight of the facility and surrounding area. Ammonia levels during the overflight were detected between 6 to 10 parts per million (ppm) at 650 feet downwind or southeast of the site and consistent with wind direction.

At 1208 hours on April 18, 2013, the EPA ASPECT conducted a second overflight of the facility and surrounding area. Ammonia levels during the overflight were detected southeast of the site and consistent with wind direction. The detections were at 6 ppm and 3 ppm.

Between 0430 to 0530 on April 18, 2013 the 6th Civil Support Team (CST) and Waco Fire Department HAZMAT conducted a Level B entry to deploy air monitoring instrumentation near the incident location. On April 18, 2013, TCEQ contractors performed an entry to assess a leaking anhydrous ammonia tank on-site. According to TCEQ representatives, the release was secured by closing a valve on one of the bullet tanks.

At 1155 hours on April 19, 2013, the EPA ASPECT conducted a third overflight of the explosion site and potentially affected areas to acquire aerial photography of the explosion site.

As of 1900 hours on April 19, 2013, EPA continues to perform air monitoring in residential areas around the site, including areas where search and rescue operations are on-going and areas affected by the evacuation order. Specific chemicals monitored included volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas. No significant levels were detected. EPA performed air monitoring within the facility boundaries during an ATF-led assessment of the incident. Air monitoring criteria included volatile organic compounds, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and lower explosive limit of methane gas. Monitoring instruments did not detect any of the listed parameters.

As of 2000 hours on April 20, 2013, EPA continues to perform mobile and stationary air monitoring in residential areas surrounding the site. Mobile air monitoring was conducted in residential areas, including areas planned to be re-opened to the public in the next few days. One stationary monitor was deployed at the high school southeast of the site, and was later moved to the apartment complex east of the site due to a change in wind direction. No significant levels of contaminants were detected. Search and rescue activities were complete on 4/19/2013. EPA prepared a Quality Assurance Sampling Plan for soil sampling in the area immediately surrounding the site to assess the concentrations of potential site related contaminants and coordinated with local officials, TCEQ, and ATF on sampling mission.

At 2040, TCEQ and Union Pacific railroad personnel began offloading the remaining anhydrous ammonia

product from on-site tanks. The offloading of the anhydrous ammonia was completed successfully at approximately 2130 hours and transported as product offsite to Waco, Texas. EPA conducted stationary air monitoring downwind of the transfer operations and is coordinated with TCEQ, Union Pacific, Texas DEM, and the various law enforcement agencies.

EPA continues to coordinate with ATF, OSHA, CSB, TCEQ, and the Office of the Texas State Chemist on current and future site operations.

TCEQ contractors continued conducting air monitoring around the facility perimeter.

An official statement of the cause of the incident has not been released. Investigations into the order of events and cause of the explosion are on-going.

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

EPA will collect soil samples in the area immediately surrounding the site to determine the potential off-site impacts from pesticides and herbicides involved in the explosion and fire.

EPA and TCEQ will conduct air monitoring activities throughout neighborhoods near the incident location.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Air monitoring activities by both TCEQ and EPA will continue.

EPA will conduct soil sampling in the area surrounding the site to assess the levels of potential site related contaminants in the areas immediately surrounding the site.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

2.2.2 Issues

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

3. Participating Entities

No information available at this time.

4. Personnel On Site

No information available at this time.

5. Definition of Terms

No information available at this time.

6. Additional sources of information

No information available at this time.

7. Situational Reference Materials

No information available at this time.